Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the subject application. This Response is submitted in response to the Final Office Action mailed May 27, 2010. Claims 34, 48-50, 91-93, 98, 121 and 126-135 are pending and rejected. Claims 48-50, 91, 93, 98 and 126-135 have been amended. Claims 34 and 121 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 136-138 are new. Claim 138 is a 'system' claim corresponding to the 'method' claim 136. No new matter has been added.

Specification

Summary of the Invention

The Applicant has amended the description with a new Summary of the Invention in line with the new independent claim 136.

Abstract

The Applicant has provided a replacement ABSTRACT. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the objection be removed.

Substitute Specification

The Examiner has stated the substitute specification filed on the April 6, 2010 has not been entered as the amendments constitute new matter and lacks support in the original specification filed on March 29, 2004.

We submit that all the amendments to the specification filed on March 29, 2004 either have fair basis or correct obvious errors, or clarify terminology without adding any new matter.

Since the original USPTO filing on March 29, 2004, the following amendments have occurred:

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	Abstract	Description	Claims
Response to 1st office action dated Jan 24, 2008 – Original filing	Amended	Amended	Amended
Response to 2nd office action dated Apr 13, 2009 - Original filing	Amended	-	Amended
Response to 1st office action dated Nov 6, 2009 – 1st RCE	Amended	Amended	Amended

The amendments to the specification description in response to the Nov 6, 2009 Office Action were limited to an updated 'Summary of Invention' to correspond with the wording of the sole independent claim (claim 121) and the transfer of the previous 'Summary of Invention' text to the 'Detailed Description' section.

Consequently, the issue of support for the previous claim amendments of April 6, 2010 rests on the fair basis for the description amendments filed on July 24, 2008 in the Applicant's response to the Jan 24, 2008 Office Action.

The Applicant's response of July 24, 2008 itemized all the amendments individually. To aid assessment, those amendments are re-iterated in Appendix A in the same sequence and format and numbered as Amendment Items 1-98.

Support in the specification filed on March 29, 2004 for each of the 98 Amendment Items is grouped as follows:

A. **Updating 'Brief Summary of Invention' and 'Detailed Description' to correspond to claim amendments**
B. **Clarification of the terms 'entities', 'contacts', 'users' and 'nodes'**
C. **Use of the term 'Social Network'**
D. **Clarification of the terms 'applications' and 'activities'**
E. **Clarification of the terms 'interrelationship context information', 'entity attribute', 'entity identifying characteristic'**
F. **Typographical and grammar error corrections**
G. **Transfer of text within the Specification**

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A. **Updating 'Brief Summary of Invention' and 'Detailed Description' to correspond to claim amendments** - Amendment Items 8 and 9.

It is submitted that support for all of Amendment Items 8, 9 and 77 was present in the original specification filed on March 29, 2004. However, Amendments Items 8, 9 and 77 corresponded to claim amendments that were subsequently removed from consideration unilaterally by the Examiner in his restriction requirement dated April 13, 2009. The Applicant has now updated the description to correspond to the claim amendments filed with the present response (described further below). Consequently, in order to avoid pointless discussion of obsolete issues, fair basis arguments are provided below solely for the current claim amendments.

B. **Clarification of the terms 'entities', 'contacts', 'users' and 'nodes'** - Amendments Items 13, 18,19, 23,15,26-28, 32, 32, 35-37, 40-45, 47, 49,51,53, 54, 56, 57, 60, 63-65, 69, 70, 75, 76, 80, 81 and 87-95.

In response to the Examiner's specific request, amendments were made to clarify these terms. More specifically, consistency and clarity was improved throughout the description by unifying the terminology such that usage of the terms 'entity'; 'user'; 'entity user'; 'node' and 'contacts' with overlapping, interchangeable, or equivalent meaning were rationalised.

Page 1, line 15 states

> *"The Internet has connected the world with literally billions of connected nodes (or users) representing entities of various types.."*

illustrating the interlinking of the terms 'nodes', 'users', and 'entities'.

Page 11, line 7 states

> *"As used herein, the term 'entity' or 'entities' refers to any individual, family, personal or organised network, organisation, club, society, company, partnership, religion, or entity that exists as a particular and discrete unit."*

and thus defines "Entities" as the broadest term used to denote individuals or organisations involved with the present invention. As expand on below, it will be apparent therefore that an 'entity' may also be a system 'user', a 'contact', and also a 'node'.

Moreover, as an 'entity' may not necessarily be an individual and may not necessarily be a 'user' of the system, the term 'user entity' was updated throughout the specification to denote any entity who, at a given time is using the system.

A 'contact' is used throughout the specification to denote *"one or more entities known directly or indirectly to the user "* as stated on page 11, line 3.

To avoid ambiguity from the term 'contacts' as a noun and adjective, the usage of the terms "a contact/contacts" were rationalised solely to a noun, denoting 'entities' who have become 'connected' to a user entity. Thus, the term is intrinsically defined with respect to the relationship of the 'contact' to another entity, i.e., a user entity.

The term 'nodes' is used as a direct alternative to 'entity' throughout the 'Background Art' section, e.g. Page 1, line 20, page 2, lines 9, 10, 12, 17, while page 13, line 5 states;

> *"Entities, including the user may be considered as "nodes" in a network"*

The specification also details (page 19, line 7) an embodiment whereby the invention provides;

> *"a means of visually displaying the interconnections between the nodes."*

Thus, the use of the term 'node' was restricted to this embodiment to avoid any potentially confusing overlap with the alternative terms such as 'entity', or 'user'.

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Amendment Items 13, 18, 19, 23, 15, 26-28, 32, 32, 35-37, 40-45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 60, 63-65, 69, 70, 75, 76, 81, 82 and 88-96 are solely directed to the above described clarification of these terms and as such no new matter is added.

C. **Use of the term 'Social Network'** - Amendment Items 10, 11, 15-17, 21, 22, 24, 31, 34, 38, 39, 46, 52, 62, 66, 71, 72, 73, 74, 77, 83, 85 and 86.

As previously submitted to the Examiner, the present application was written at a period before the terminology 'Social Network' attained its current widespread recognition for systems and methods such as the present invention.

However, page 34, line 4 states:

> *"In the simplest embodiment, the system of the present invention defines a social network formed by the entities stored in the database.*
> *"*

which clearly links the present invention as an virtual (i.e., stored and operated virtually on a system such as a database) social network. Adding the descriptor 'Social' to the description of the present invention in the specification and claims can therefore be seen as not only fairly based, but in fact having a potentially narrowing effect on the scope of the claims.

The term 'social network' is also used in the specification in its conventional, non-virtual context on page 4, line 13, page 7, line 4 as well as a virtual social network on page 31, line 18 and page 34, line 4. Thus, adding the descriptor 'Virtual' simply assists in distinguishing a conventional social network, from one stored and operated virtually on a system.

The originally filed specification described the present invention using the characterising terminology a *'unique, private, personal network'*.

The amendments made in the Applicant's response on July 24, 2008, changed 'unique, private, personal network' to "...virtual, unique, private, personal, social network (herein a 'social network')."

As expounded above, this amendment did not add any new or broadening terminology. It did however improve clarity and readability of the specification and allowed the combination of terms to be subsequently abbreviated where applicable to 'social network'.

Amendment Items 10, 11, 15-17, 21, 22, 24, 31, 34, 38, 39, 46, 52, 62, 66, 71, 72, 73, 74, 83 and 85 are directed to the above described clarification of the term 'social network', either solely, or in combination with the above described amendments in Section A regarding the terms 'entity'; 'user'; 'entity user'; 'node' and 'contacts' and as such no new matter is added.

Amendment Items 77 is a re-wording of the passage from page 34, line 11 to page 35, line 3 to incorporate the terms 'user entity' and to improve the clarity and readability of the passage. No new material is added.

D. **Clarification of the terms 'applications' and 'activities'** - Amendment Items 1-7, 29, 68, 78, 84, 87, and 97.

Also in response to the request by the Examiner in the Office Action dated January 24, 2008 to clarify terms appearing 'vague or indefinite', the Applicant harmonised and rationalised the usage of the terms 'Applications' and 'activities'. In order to distinguish the term 'Applications' used with respect to the virtual social network of the present invention from other incidental or confusing usage of the term in the 'Prior Art' description account for Amendment Items 1-7.

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Amendment Item 68, 78, 80, 84, and 97 simply replaces 'Application', used in the sense of an 'embodiment' or the like with the term 'implementation' to improve readability. As will be readily apparent to one skilled in the art, no new material is involved in this minor replacement.

Amendment Item 87 also improves clarity and readability by adding the underscored terms below;

As discussed above, in the present embodiment, the system (1) is primarily directed

towards a single application-specific system...

As is readily evident, this is a minor clarity correction and adds no new or broadening matter.

E. **Clarification of the terms 'interrelationship context information', 'entity attribute', 'entity identifying characteristic'** - Amendment Items 12 and 14.

Amendment Item 12 added the following paragraph;

> *"Preferably, said identifying characteristics of an entity encompasses any communication means capable of individually communicating with said entity including, but not limited to, the entities' name and preferably a means of contacting the entity, preferably including an e-mail address; telephone and/or facsimile number; postal address and/or any combination of such means."*

However, the original specification states on page 13, line 6;

> *"Each node preferably includes at least one identifying characteristics of the corresponding entity it represents including the entities name and preferably a means of contacting the entity, preferably including an e-mail address; telephone and/or facsimile number; postal address and/or any communication means capable of individually communicating with the entity or any combination of such means."*

Therefore, given that the term for 'node' is equivalent to the term 'entity' as established above, it can be seen that Amendment Item 12, has fair basis and is simply

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being reiterated at the relevant portion of the description to enhance the readability and clarity.

Also requested by the Examiner in the Office Action dated January 24, 2008 was support for the term 'Interrelationship Context information'. To reiterate the Applicant's response of July 24, 2008 , the term 'Interrelationship Context information' is simply a self-explanatory phrase denoting information providing a form of context to an interrelationship. By way of further clarification, references on page 11, line 21 – page 12, line 6 state;

> "...interrelationship context information includes a connection factor indicative of the separation between entity contact and the user entity, and optionally also the separation between contacts in said user entity's social network." and

> "The interrelationship context information optionally includes details of one or more entity attributes. Therefore, in addition to the user's knowledge that another entity is a direct contact (i.e. there is no intermediary between the entity and the user entity) or knowledge of the connections via which the entity is indirectly known/connected to the user (i.e. the connection factor), further interrelationship context information may be available via details of any corresponding entity attributes made available to the user."

The description earlier defines (page 11, line 12):

> "Preferably, said system includes for each entity one or more entity attributes, including at least one identifying characteristic."

Therefore, although the meaning and scope of the term is neither vague nor indefinite, to aid clarity and advancement of the examination, the following summarizing text was added at page 12, line 7;

> It is thus axiomatic that said interrelationship context information self-explanatorily provides information about the context of the interrelationship between a connection between at least two contacts and/or between a contact and said user. More specifically, and in

summary of the above, said interrelationship context information includes at least one:

- *entity attribute,*
- *entity identifying characteristic, and/or*
- *a connection factor indicative of the separation between two contacts and/or between a contact and the user*

Thus, it can be seen Amendment item 14 is by way of clarification, is entirely supported and adds no new or broadening matter.

F. **Typographical and grammar error corrections** - Amendment Items 30, 50, 55, 58, 59, 61, 67 and 97.

Minor typographical errors and grammar corrections were made in Amendment Items 30, 50, 55, 58, 59, 61, 67 and in part of item 97. No new or broadening matter was added by these corrections.

G. **Transfer of text within the Specification** - Amendment Items 9, 20, 48 and 79.

In response to the Examiner's request in the office action dated January 24, 2008 for a brief 'Summary of Invention' section, the 'Brief Description of the Drawings' section was relocated. Thus, the pertinent section of Amendment Item 9 and all of Amendment Item 79 relate to this transfer and no new material was added.

As discussed above, the usage of the term 'node' relative to the alternatives terms 'entity'; 'user'; 'entity user'; and 'contacts' was rationalised and clarified. The use of the term 'node' was limited primarily as means of visually displaying to remained as

As part of this process, the passage (originally on page 19, line 7 – page 20, line 19) describing the means of

"*visually displaying the interconnections between the nodes……*"

was transferred to page 13, line 14. This transfer was the sole function of Amendment Items 20 and 48 and thus no new matter was added.

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Substitute Specification – Summary of Fair Basis assessment

In light of the above analysis, it is submitted that all Amendment Items 1-98, with the exception of 8 and 9 should be entered. Amendment Items 8 and 9 have been suspended and replaced by a Summary of Invention wording corresponding to the new claim 138. Fair basis for this amendment is detailed below.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112, 1st Paragraph

The Examiner objected that *'the claims have no support in the original specification (hereinafter "the specification") filed on 3/19/2004. The specification fails to disclose a method having steps and limitations as recited in the rejected claims.'*

As illustrated above, all the amendments to the specification description in the Applicant's response of July 24, 2008 were fairly based and did not add new matter. The 'Brief Summary of Invention' and 'Detailed Description' amendments corresponding to the amended claims filed on July 24, 2008 have been updated to correspond with the amended claims filed with the Applicant's response of April 6, 2010 together with limited amendments discussed further below.

Support for the new independent claim 136, which is substantially based on claim 121 submitted on the April 6, 2010 may be seen from the following table illustrating the elements of the claim 136 with the corresponding support found in relevant description pages and claims of the original specification filed on March 19, 2004.

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Independent Claim 136	Support in Originally filed Specification
A method performed by a social network system accessible over a data network and a plurality of data input devices connectable to said data network, said social network system including at least one host computer and a database of entity data records each relating to a corresponding user entity	Claim 6, 72, 74 Page 26, 27, 39
and containing one or more entity attributes including at least one identifying characteristic of said corresponding user entity,	Claim 3, 72 Page 11, 26
said method providing a given user entity with a virtual, unique, private, personal, social network (hereinafter 'social network') formed from connections between contacts, said contacts being other user entities connected directly or indirectly to said first user entity; said method including:	Claim 1, 23, 24, 28 Page 11, 14, 15,

• communicating an invitation from a first user entity to one or more other user entities selected by said first user entity for inclusion in the first user entity's social network as a contact;	Claim 24 Page 13, 14, 19, 43
• recording, in said database, each user entity accepting said invitation as being a direct contact directly connected to the first user entity by a first degree of separation;	Claims 22 and 24 Page 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 43, 44, 50
• determining that for: – any second user entity directly connected to the first user entity and – any third user entity directly connected to the second user entity but not directly connected to the first user entity, the first and third user entities are determined as being indirect contacts, indirectly connected to each other with a second degree of separation;	Page 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 43, 44, 50

• repeating the above steps for a given user entity having a corresponding entity data record in said database, wherein said given user entity is equivalent to said first user entity in said repeated steps to create, for each said given user entity, a corresponding individual, unique, personal, virtual social network, thereby collectively forming a plurality of social networks on said social network system, inter-connected by mutually connected contacts; and	Claim 72, 94. Page 27, 35, 43.
• providing a given user entity with searchable access to at least part of the entity data records stored in said database;	Page 21, 22, 23, 26, 35
• providing a given user entity with at least partial control of privacy of their individual, unique, personal, virtual social network with respect to a user entity seeking access to the given user entity's data record by permitting the given user entity to specify: – a connection factor between the given user entity and said seeking user entity and/or – one or more entity attributes of said seeking user entity,	Page 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, Claims 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 27, 28, 36 and 56

required to allow the seeking user entity access to said given user entity's data record;	
• permitting a given user entity to take a role of provider or participant in a predetermined activity and/or application via said data network, wherein	Page 15, 25, 26, 33, 34, 48, 50. Claim 34, 45,
– a provider is a user entity providing an item or service to at least one other user entity; and – a participant is a user entity utilising said provider's item or service.	Page 15, 25, 26, 33, 34, 48, 50. Claim 34, 45,

It can be seen the subject matter of claim 136 is a composition of original claims 1, 3, 6-8, 11-13, 22, 24, 28, 34, 36, 45, 56, 72, 74, 94 and portions of the description on pages 11, 12, 14-27, 33-35, 39, 43, 44, 48, 50 of the originally filed specification.

It is respectfully brought to the Examiner's attention that the method claimed in claim 121 (on which new claim 136 is based) is not a sequential method and several of the steps may be performed concurrently or in different order. Thus, although the basis for each of the steps is found within the specification at the locations indicated in the table, this does not constitute any failure to disclose the claimed method.

The Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC §112, 1st Paragraph.

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<u>Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112, 2nd Paragraph</u>

> *"The terms "entity attributes" and" identifying characteristic" in the preamble of claim 121 are vague and indefinite. It is not clear what they are. The term "application", in the 8th last line of claim 121, and the terms "item, element, issue or service" in the second last paragraph of claim 121 have similar defect." (Office Action, page 4)*

These terms are defined and explained numerous times in the specification. However, for ease of reference we summarize.

Entity attributes

An entity attribute is something attributed as belonging to the entity. Examples of entity attributes are given on Page 11, line 14, reiterated here for ease of reference.

> *"Preferably, said entity attributes include information regarding personal details, factors or interests; friends; relations; school alumni; employment factors; business colleagues; professional acquaintances; sexual preferences, persuasions, or proclivities; sporting interests; entertainment, artistic, creative or leisure interests; travel interests, commercial, religious, political, theological or ideological belief or opinions; academic, scientific, or engineering disciplines; humanitarian, social, security/military or economic fields and any combination of same."*

The entity attributes can include any information about the user entity. These entity attributes are then used for various communication purposes, searching, applications etc.

Identifying characteristic

The term identifying characteristic represents any characteristic of the entity capable of identifying the user entity, Page 13, line 9 gives examples of:

> *"Each node preferably includes at least one identifying characteristics of the corresponding entity it represents including the entities name and preferably a means of contacting the entity, preferably including an e-mail address; telephone and/or facsimile number; postal address and/or any communication means capable of individually communicating with the entity or any combination of such means.*

Preferably said identifying characteristics also include at least one of said entity attributes."

It will be appreciated that a user entity's identifying characteristics may include entity attributes and vice versa, e.g. an entity's name is an identifying characteristic (a characteristic of that entity capable of being used to identify the entity) and is also an attribute of that entity.

As explained above, the words forming these terms have the same meaning as would be applied in general use and using dictionary definitions.

Application

An application is simply any process which the user entities either provide or participate in. Examples of applications are provided Page 15, line 12 of the originally filed specification;

> *"Preferably, said applications include (but are not limited to) consumer decisions, buying, selling, trading loaning; finding flatmates/roommates, tenants; organising activities and events, recommendations/opinions including those related to films, plays, books, employment, services, tradesmen, accommodation, restaurants and the like, comparison and explorations of common interests, e.g. horse riding, snowboarding, etc; sharing peer-to-peer personal or business creative work or content, e.g. photos, art-work, literature, music; managing a club or society; locating/supplying/"blacklisting" providers of goods or services; business or technological advice unsuitable for publication; recruitment, job-seeking; estate agents; venture capital; collaborative ventures; referrals; police/security information gathering/informants; event manager; address book manager; search engines; headhunting; book mark service; spam filtering; car sharing; sales leads; market entry advice; real-estate; sharing personal or business files; company knowledge management; medical advice; travel organiser, lending/borrowing; house-sitting; baby-sitting; classified advertisements; finding musicians."*

So, for example, an application may be sharing photos. Thus the application allows a 'provider' of photos to send some photos to the 'participant'.

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Item, element, issue or service

These terms serve to describe what can be transacted or communicated between provider and participant in the application or activity.

To advance examination and in the interests of improved clarity and succinctness, we have deleted the terms "element" and "issue" from the claims.

The terms item and service can be assigned their normal meanings. Thus, an item is simply any 'thing', including tangible or intangible objects, data and information. A service is any act or performance conducted by the provider for the participant.

Page 25, line 7 of the originally filed specification states (emphasis added);

– *"A provider is an entity with some form of tangible (e.g. a product to sell, a job vacancy, a house to let) or intangible (e.g. information, participation in a sporting event, emotional support for counselling, on offer of friendship/romance) __item,__ element __or service__ which they can contribute, pass on, give, sell, make available to another entity.*

– *A participant is an entity utilising the provider's tangible or intangible __item or service__, e.g., obtaining from the provider (either directly or indirectly) a product, service, job, advice, recommendation, contact details, specific information, a relationship and so forth.*

Applicant respectfully submits that the terms item and service are assigned their normal and natural meaning in the specification and are therefore clear and unambiguous.

Applicant thus submits that the aforementioned terms are not vague and indefinite to one skilled in the art and trust the above summaries are sufficient for the Examiner.

The Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection under *35 USC §112, 2nd Paragraph.*

The Examiner has rejected the previously presented claims on the grounds of obviousness in light of Facebook, Dating Networks, Instant Messaging, VPN etc. The Applicant has replaced independent method claims 122 with new method claim 136, which includes amendments for clarity and readability to the wording of claim 122.

Facebook

In response, firstly the Applicant respectfully submits that the present application pre-dates the now ubiquitous social networks such as Facebook, Friendster, Xing, Bebo etc. and therefore cannot be anticipated or rendered obvious in light of these social networks.

We remind the Examiner that the present application has a priority date of September 30, 2001.

Secondly, Applicant respectfully submits that the current claims are not anticipated or rendered obvious by Dating Networks, Instant Messaging, VPNs etc. for the reasons outlined in the present application, as previously presented in past office action responses and for the following summarised reasons with respect to the currently presented claims.

Dating Networks

Dating Networks existing prior to the present invention simply involved a single, common network to which all users are part of while providing search functionality to allow users to locate and communicate with other users meeting certain search criteria. In contrast to the present invention as claimed in new claim 136, Dating Networks therefore:

a) are not "...*unique*" (as in the present claimed invention), i.e. every user is part of exactly the same network. Axiomatically, a Dating Network does not have "...*a plurality of social networks on said social network system*".

b) do not involve:

- determining that for:

  - any second user entity directly connected to the first user entity and

  - any third user entity directly connected to the second user entity but not directly connected to the first user entity,

  the first and third user entities are determined as being indirect contacts, indirectly connected to each other with a second degree of separation;

In fact, this aspect of the present claimed invention is disadvantageous to dating networks where users do not want restricted access to particular users, e.g. friends, friends-of-friends. A user on a Dating Network wants access to as many other users as possible.

c) do not provide other users with the ability to set the privacy of their entity attributes with respect to a *connection factor* (i.e. the degree of separation) to a seeking user. This is not possible as prior art dating networks only have one degree of separation between all users.

Instant messaging

Prior art Instant messaging services involve communication between a user and one or more contacts. In contrast to the present invention as claimed in new independent 136, Instant messaging systems do not:

a) provide a network with direct and indirect contacts. An instant messaging user's 'network' is restricted to direct contacts. In terms of the new claim 136, Instant Messaging does not involve:

- determining that for:

  - any second user entity directly connected to the first user entity and

- any third user entity directly connected to the second user entity but not directly connected to the first user entity,

the first and third user entities are determined as being indirect contacts, indirectly connected to each other with a second degree of separation;

b) provide other users with the ability to set the privacy of their entity attributes. In terms of the new claim 136, Instant Messaging does not involve:

- providing a given user entity with at least partial control of privacy of their individual, unique, personal, virtual social network with respect to a user entity seeking access to the given user entity's data record by permitting the given user entity to specify:

  −a connection factor between the given user entity and said seeking user entity and/or

  −one or more entity attributes of said seeking user entity,

  required to allow the seeking user entity access to said given user entity's data record;

VPN

A VPN is simply a data link between users that is inaccessible to any unauthorised entity not part of the VPN. A VPN differs from the present claimed invention because:

a) each node/entity on the VPN does not have a "...*unique*" network i.e. all users of the VPN are inherently part of the same network. As with dating networks, a VPN also does not have "...*a plurality of social networks on said social network system*".

c) a VPN does not provide a network with direct and indirect contacts as all contacts are equally related (direct) in a VPN. In terms of the independent claim 136, Instant Messaging also does not include:

- determining that for:

  − any second user entity directly connected to the first user entity and

- any third user entity directly connected to the second user entity but not
directly connected to the first user entity,

the first and third user entities are determined as being indirect contacts,
indirectly connected to each other with a second degree of separation;

d) a VPN does not provide other users with the ability to set the privacy of their social
network. In terms of the independent claim 136, a VPN is not capable of:

- providing a given user entity with at least partial control of privacy of their
individual, unique, personal, virtual social network with respect to a user
entity seeking access to the given user entity's data record by permitting the
given user entity to specify:

    −a connection factor between the given user entity and said seeking user
    entity and/or

    −one or more entity attributes of said seeking user entity,

    required to allow the seeking user entity access to said given user entity's
    data record;

Conclusion

The Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the present claimed invention is not

rendered obvious by any single or combination of prior art Dating Networks, Instant

Messaging and/or VPNs. It is submitted that new claims 136 is neither anticipated nor

obvious in light of the prior art raised by the Examiner and that consequently all the

dependent method claims 48-50, 91, 93, 98, 126-135 and 137 are also novel and

inventive.

The Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection under 35

USC §103(a).

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite or assist in the allowance of the present application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (650) 798-0342.

Please charge any shortages and credit any overages to Deposit Account No. 19-3140. Any necessary extension of time for response not already requested is hereby requested. Please charge any corresponding fee to Deposit Account No. 19-3140.

Respectfully submitted,
SNR DENTON US LLP

Date: ____November 29, 2010____   __/Stephen M. De Klerk/_____
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